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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 28 | Min 14 | Humidity 50% Generally cloudy sky. Misty morning Sensex 58,253 | Nifty 17,354 | Gold 48,083 | Silver 62,681 | Dollar 74.51 | Euro 84.75 | GBP 100.83

OFFLINE CLASSES TO GO ON, BUT A CONDITION APPLIES

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DOCS TAKE WAIT-&-WATCH STANCE FOR NEXT 2 WEEKS

'BENGALURU IN RED LIST, TOUGHER RULES LOOM'

PAGE 3

In 2021, just 7.8% of cyber crime cases were disposed of in the city when compared to 49.5 per cent in 2020

CYBERPUNKS

Cases down by 40%; trials very low

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First the good news: The number of cyber crime cases have come down. And now the bad: the number of cases being chargesheeted or making it to the court remains very low.

Various issues such as identifying the cyber criminal and gathering evidence still remain quite challenging to the police.

In 2021, only 7.8 per cent of cyber crime cases were disposed of in the city when compared to 49.5 per cent in 2020. In 2019, 39.6 per cent cases were disposed of.

City police commissioner Kamal Pant said that people are more aware about cyber crimes so they are not falling prey like before.

"We have been spreading awareness on cyber crime in the city through which we have been able to prevent many from falling prey. Cyber crime case tally has come down and unlike before now the cases are being investigated at the station level in all CEN police stations," he said.

Police also said that cyber crime investigation is a lengthy process and it takes months to gather information and identify the suspect and find links to the reported crime.

According to the data shared by the crime records bureau, the number of cyber crimes in the city decreased by 40 per cent. In 2019, the city had reported the highest number of cyber crime cases at 10,553 when the city police opened eight Cyber Economic and Narcotic (CEN) stations in all eight police divisions to bring down cyber crimes. The number came down to 6,287 in 2021 against 8,892 in 2020. In 2021, the West CEN reported the highest number of cases with 1,115 followed by South with 931 and Whitefield with 853.

Of the 6,287 cases in 2021, only 493 cases were disposed of while in 2020 and 2019, of 10,553 and 8,892 cases, 4,183 and 4,402 cases were disposed of.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

PIC FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

"Currently there are eight CEN police inspectors and each of them handles 5,000 to 7,000 cases, which is very difficult. Adding a few more inspectors would help in disposing of the cases quicker.
— Police

Tripping on Ashoka the Great

A motorcycle journey through Karnataka tracing the edicts of the emperor

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Many Bengalureans go on road trips to scenic locations to unwind post hectic work schedules. Now, here's a Bengalurean road tripper with a penchant for history. Kiran Balakrishan went on a 'historical' trip visiting the edicts of emperor Ashoka the Great in Karnataka.

Balakrishnan said apart from the historical significance of the route, it is indeed a perfect bike circuit.

After much afterthought and research, Balakrishnan embarked on the four-day trip covering 1,200 km along the locations of the edicts.

He started from Bengaluru and headed towards Brahmagiri. All three locations, Brahmagiri, Ashoka Siddapura and Jatinga Rameshwara are within a 3-km radius.

The next stops were Yadgir, Nittur and Udegolam in Bellary district; Maski in Raichur district followed by Sannati in Kalaburagi on the third day. For the last stop, Balakrishnan visited Palkigundu and Gavimath in the Koppal district.

For history enthusiasts like him, Maski is the most significant of all the locations. This is supposedly the first edict to have mentioned emperor Ashoka by name.

Though most of the locations of the edicts are not motorable and one needs to hike towards, for Balakrishnan the joy

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 Interactive Museum

Immerse yourself in India's rich musical heritage at Bengaluru`s newest and most exciting cultural hub – the Indian Music Experience Museum (IME)! The IME is India's only interactive music museum. It features a Sound Garden with 10 playable musical sculptures, Exhibit Galleries with musical instruments, storyboards, touchscreens, mini-theatres, and audio-video kiosks, a Learning Centre with regular classes and workshops, and much more. **Where: JP Nagar, 2 km from Yelachenahalli Metro Station**
When: Museum is open from Tuesday to Sunday; 10 am – 6 pm; Ticket price: Rs 100 onwards

02 Musical evening

Saarya Creations" is organising "Raagadhare", an evening filled with music of different genres from renowned singers. It will feature Bhaavageethe, Bhaktigeethe, Janapadageethe and Filmy Hits!
Where: Gayana Samaja, Basavanagudi
When: January 8 from 6 pm onwards
Ticket price Rs 300

03 Learn Madhubani

Madhubani painting is one of the many famous Indian art forms. As it is practiced in the Mithila region of Bihar and Nepal, it is called Mithila or Madhubani art. The colors used in Madhubani paintings are usually derived from plants and other natural sources. To experience the essence of art together, sign up for Madhubani Workshop By The Rooftop!
Where: Online Workshop over Zoom App; details on @rooftop_app
When: January 3; 5 pm; Price Rs 99

Offline classes to go on, but a condition applies

Parents anxious about rider some schools have sent that if they choose to send their wards to offline classes they cannot later revert to online mode

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Some schools have told parents to choose the mode of classes they want their wards to go for

Many schools are re-starting from Monday. However, with the increase in number of covid cases, parents are now in a dilemma over whether they should send kids to school. But a circular sent out by a few schools to the parents on resumption of offline classes has caused much consternation. The schools inform parents that they are ready to conduct offline classes. Parents have been asked to give a consent letter on this. However, there is a rider: Once they opt for offline classes, they cannot later revert to online mode.

Indu Reddy, a parent, said, "I want my daughters to attend offline classes as they are not at all interested in online classes. However, I am worried about sending them as there is no option to revert to online later. The covid situation is changing day by day. If you look at covid statistics, 152 cases were reported on December 25. However, by January 1, the numbers shot up to 810. This is a clear indicator of a rapid rise in the cases."

She said that they are still clueless as to how these numbers will go in the coming days.

"We have the example of the UK where there is a daily record of covid cases. If this is the case, how can we muster courage to send the kids to offline classes continuously? So, I feel that the schools should give us a chance to revert to both online and offline classes as the need be."

However, schools have a different take.

A school principal, who didn't want to be named, said, "We need to gear up to offer online and offline classes. Currently, we are under severe stress to conduct both online and offline classes in a day. School teachers are working extra time to meet the need."

The principal explained that a few schools conduct simultaneous classes by beaming the offline classes live, and others send the video recording. "However, in our school, we are conducting offline classes in the morning and the same teacher conducts online classes in the afternoon. This is done so that we can ensure the kids of both medium (online and offline) get a right to discuss issues with the teacher. Recently, we have observed the trend that many parents send kids offline and then after a few days, they switch to online. If we don't get the right count, then how can we continue both the classes?" the principal said. "As we need clarity on the number, we have instructed the parents to take a call on which medium they need to choose."

The increase in Covid cases has also cast its effect on offline classes. For example, Delhi has already shut physical classes. Medical experts say that if positivity rate continues to go up, then the government will be recommended to conduct online classes only.

However, as the exams are nearing, the schools are also under stress to complete the portions. During the last academic year, II PU exams were cancelled and the six-paper SSLC exams were made two-paper objective exams so that all the students can pass. This year as the covid cases have started rising in January, it needs to be seen how the covid situation evolves in March, April and May when most of the exams are conducted. For now, it is only a wait and watch approach for all the stakeholders including parents and schools.

> **"We need to gear up to offer online and offline classes. We are under stress to conduct both modes in a day** – A school principal

Housing sales rise by 33% in B'luru

Bengaluru saw a 33 per cent increase in housing sales to 33,080 units in 2021 from 24,910 units in the previous year. Housing sales across top seven cities rose 71 per cent year-on-year in 2021 to 2,36,530 units, but demand fell short of pre-Covid levels by 10 per cent, according to Anarock. Housing sales stood at 1,38,350 units in 2020 and 2,61,358 units in the 2019 calendar year. Mumbai-based Anarock attributed the rise in housing sales to very low interest rates on home loans, pent-up demand, surge in aspiration for home ownership, cut in stamp duty by a few states including Maharashtra and discounts offered by builders. The fourth quarter contributed nearly 39 per cent to overall sales during the last year, on festive demand and other positive factors.

According to the Anarock annual data, housing sales in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) rose 72 per cent to 76,400 units in 2021 from 44,320 units in the previous year. Sales in Hyderabad jumped nearly threefolds to 25,410 units last year from 8,560 units in 2020. Delhi-NCR witnessed 73 per cent rise, Pune 53 and Kolkata, 86 per cent.

"Extrapolating on the performance in 2021, 2022 will see very satisfactory growth as long as the pandemic remains in check," Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said. He hoped sales to reach pre-covid level in 2022 and noted that demand would further consolidate towards trusted developers.

"Input cost pressure and supply chain issues may induce a 5-8 per cent increase in property prices," Puri pointed out. On the supply side, Anarock said that new launches increased 85 per cent to 2,36,700 units across these seven cities in 2021 as against 1,28,000 units in the previous year. **– PTI**

Docs take wait-&-watch stance for next 2 weeks

With number of cases rising and hospitalisations still under control, experts say it all depends on what course covid tally takes over the coming weeks

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The increase in covid cases in the state may have caused concern among the people, but hospitalisations of covid patients hasn't increased. Experts say if the cases continue to go up for another two weeks, then more hospitalisations can be expected.

Bengaluru still is reeling from memories of the first and second waves of covid, when people found it difficult to get beds in hospitals. While the cases have so gone up so much this time, the city can see an uptick in hospitalisations, if the cases keep increasing in the next two weeks, they said.

The state reported 1,187 cases on Sunday, and the large chunk of positive cases remained in Bengaluru with 923 cases, however hospitalisations are still well in control. Health professionals said one of the reasons for this could be that a majority are vaccinated and the other that the variant has not caused high severity.

Dr. Anoop Amarnath, Head, Scientific Board and Chairman-Geriatric Medicine, Manipal Hospital and member of the state's covid-19 Critical Care Support Team, said, "The numbers of hospitalisations hasn't increased yet. However during the pandemic what we see is once cases started to increasing, hospitalisations are seen in two weeks. There is always a lag period.

We have to keep a watch in the next few weeks. Even in the district hospitals across the state, we are not seeing an increase in hospitalisation. Irrespective of vaccination, we shouldn't miss covid appropriate behaviour." He said those eligible for booster doses, need to take it too.

Going by the BBMP data of hospital admissions, the number of admissions in the private hospitals are higher than those of government hospitals.

KAUSHIK JN

Medical staff of MS Ramaiah Hospital wished everyone a covid-free new year

In the last 15 days, December 18- January 1, 350 admissions were reported in private quota and 68 admissions in government quota. From December 26-January 1, the number of hospitalisations have been higher than the previous week. On December 26, 18 admissions were reported in private hospitals, then 21 admissions reported on December 27, followed by 28 admissions on December 28, and highest reported on December 29, with 37 hospitalisations, further December 30 reported 32 cases of admissions and 31st and January 1 reported 27 and 20 admissions each.

Dr. Ravindra Mehta, Senior Consultant, and HoD, Pulmonology and Interventional Pulmonology, Apollo Speciality Hospital, said, "Though hospitalisations have been low, we need to focus on testing. We can't let the number of tests go down. Maximum number of tests need to be carried out and people need to be detected at an early stage. In the next 10 days, we will have a better idea as to how the cases admissions will be. So far, the variant has been kind with less severity and hence admissions are low."

> **"Though the hospitalisations are low, we need to focus on testing. We can't let the number of tests dip** – Dr Ravindra Mehta

Hospital admissions

As per BBMP data, the total admissions reported in private hospitals as of Sunday is 296 under private quote and 38 in govt quota.

The maximum number of admissions are reported in general beds with 254 admissions under private quota and two in govt quota, however 91 cases alone were reported in private quota between the age group 19-40 years and next highest was seen in the 60 plus age group with 78 admissions.

The number of HDU patients are 29 in govt quota and 11 in the private quota, while in the ICU, there are 29 admissions reported. The ICU ventilator cases are low with two admissions.

The CV Raman hospital which was allotted as the designated hospital for covid 19 by the government a week ago has been preparing to make it the covid ward. "We will start covid admissions from Monday. We had 40 non covid patients admitted. Most of them are discharged, a few are up for discharge on Monday and we will have the covid patients admitted," said a senior doctor from CV Raman hospital.

'Bengaluru in red list, tougher rules loom'

As the Covid cases in the city are rising, the night curfew is likely to be extended. According to Revenue Minister R Ashoka, Bengaluru is in the red zone as of now. The current phase of night curfew is to end on January 7. During Sunday's meeting, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai along with his cabinet colleagues and ministers discussed the issue on Covid control. Later speaking to the media, Ashoka said that the 'tough rules' are necessary to curb the Covid rise.

Sources said that the experts were suggesting a host of measures. This includes the extension of night curfew. Currently, the night curfew is imposed between 10 pm to 5 am. There are chances that the timing may be extended by an hour or few hours. Apart from this, there are also suggestions from medical experts to impose 50 pc restrictions in cinema halls, hotels, restaurants and other places. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said that he will meet the officials in a day or two and then take a call. Higher Education Minister Dr C N Ashwath Narayan and Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar are part of would convene a meeting before January 7.

KAUSHIK JN

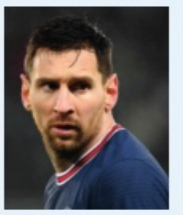
Ashoka said that the State Government will implement the recommendations of the committee in toto because we have seen the sufferings and deaths last time. The Minister explained that the government will not leave any loophole this time in terms of oxygen supply, availability of beds or medicines. "We will make all necessary arrangements. We are cautious and we will make all necessary arrangements under the leadership of our chief minister," he added.

Stating that an atmosphere of third wave is already built in the country, Ashoka said the spike in infections in Karnataka was a serious issue. "Bengaluru is in the Red Zone according to the list declared by the Union government. It is important to sound an alert in Bengaluru. We can save people's lives if we impose more restrictions in Bengaluru and reduce the number of hospitalisations," Ashoka said.

— Naveen Shivanna

COVID NOTES

Messi tests covid-positive



Lionel Messi has tested positive for Covid-19 and entered self-isolation, his club Paris Saint-Germain announced on Sunday. The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner was one of four PSG players to test positive for the virus ahead of a French Cup match against Vannes. Messi tested positive while on holiday in his hometown of Rosario in Argentina. "He is constantly in contact with our medical service. When he is negative, he will be able to return to France," PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino told a press conference. The Argentinian star has endured a difficult start to life in the French capital since an emotional exit from Barcelona last summer.

W Bengal shuts schools, spas

In view of rising covid-19 cases, the West Bengal government on Sunday decided to shut down schools and other educational institutes, spas, salons, beauty parlours, zoos, and entertainment parks from January 3.

Briefing the media here today, West Bengal Chief Secretary HK Dwivedi said, "All schools, colleges, universities, spas, salons, beauty parlours, zoos, and entertainment parks to be closed in the state from tomorrow." The government directed all government and private offices to operate at 50 per cent capacity. "All government and private offices to operate at 50 per cent capacity, all administrative meetings to be conducted via virtual mode," said Dwivedi.

Oxygen plants told to be on standby: CM

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai raised concern over the increase in Covid cases in the state, but said the state was geared up for any eventuality.

"We are seeing a gradual rise. The concern is that the cases are rising in neighbouring States as well. Hence, I have asked for an increased surveillance in border areas as many people travel between the two states. Some of the travellers may be affected but this is necessary.

Last time, we had an oxygen shortage and this time, we are taking precautions. We have already spoken to the suppliers for a steady supply. The officials have been told to keep the oxygen plants at district and taluk levels on standby mode. We are also ramping up the infrastructure and this time we will have more than 4,000 ICU beds in the State," he said.

Jabs for teens

He said vaccination for children in the age group of 15-18 years will be rolled in the State from Monday. Children born in and before 2007 will be eligible for vaccination. Vaccination will be done using Covaxin vaccine.

The second dose will be administered after 28 days.

You have 15 days to fill up potholes on 751 km

BBMP given another deadline to finish pending work, including filling craters

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While BBMP says rains prevented them from getting work done, it is rain that puts motorists also in peril

Though the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) had set several deadlines in the year 2021 to fill potholes, most of them just came and went without a whimper. What we are now being told is that potholes are still flourishing on 751 km of our roads.

Potholes featured among the most hotly debated topics during the Bengaluru development meet chaired by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai. Many legislators complained to the CM that they were facing brickbats from the voters on the bad condition of the roads. However, BBMP officials said heavy rainfall had prevented them from filling the potholes. Now, the CM has given a fresh deadline of 15 days for the potholes to be fixed.

Later, Revenue Minister R Ashoka told the media, "We hope the potholes will be filled, failing which action will be taken against the commissioner." The CM also asked the BBMP to complete the TenderSURE road work by March 31 this year and also complete the pending white-topping work.

Metro to repair roads

Many stretches of the roads where the Metro construction is going on are in bad shape. During the Sunday meeting, the CM asked the BMRCL officials to ensure that they relay the roads which have been damaged due to the construction. Besides this, the works on five grade separators at various junctions are going at a slow pace. The CM who has taken a note of this has asked the officials to immediately speed up the work. CM has also announced an additional grant of Rs 1,500 crore for remodelling of Rajakaluves.

Bonanza for Bengaluru

- Installation of 7,500 CCTvs for Bengaluru city under Nirbhaya project.
- LED streetlight project to be taken up at zonal levels
- Currently, BBMP does not have engineers in 98 of 198 wards. CM has announced that 150 civil engineers will be hired on contractual basis
- The controversial Transferable Development Rights (TDR) policy which has come under scanner for corruption and other accusations will now get a new look.
- A coordination committee either chaired by CM or Chief Secretary will allow BESCOM, BWSSB or other stakeholders to get a chance to install their infrastructure needs before the roads are laid.
- A khata will be provided to all the B Khata holders

> **"We hope the potholes will be filled, failing which action will be taken. The CM has asked pending white-topping work to be completed too** – R Ashoka, Revenue Minister

High & low tension lines go underground

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5,270 km of HT lines have gone undergound by 2021

It was in December 2020 that Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) started converting overhead (OH) electricity lines to underground (UG) cable lines, by 2021, the department has successfully converted over 5,270.73 km of high tension (HT) lines and 3422.67 km of low tension (LT) lines.

Under the project of conversion of OH lines into UG cables, Bescom has taken up conversion of existing 11kV OH lines into UG cables, and providing RMUs, further conversion of LT overhead lines by UG, or arterial bunched cables, laying of optic fibre cable along with UG cable, and conversion of existing DP structure into spun pole for for erection of existing transformers.

Bescom had proposed 7,066.86 km of 11 kV UG cable to be converted to UG Lines in four phases. Under the high tension and low tension coverage, which was in four phases, the BESCOM converted 5,270.72 km of HT lines with a total of 78.73 per cent coverage as of December-end. Similarly for LT lines, 3422.67 km were converted with 58.47 per cent coverage. On the importance of conversation of the lines, a Bescom official said, "This provides better quality and reliability of power supply to the consumers and improvement of Load Management. Further reduction of interruption period and the failure rate of distribution transformers due to LT line short circuit and unauthorised connection will be reduced."

This apart, the fatal and non-fatal accidents occurring due to snapping of OH lines and inadequate OH line to ground clearances due to conductor sagging will be prevented and RMU will promote isolation of only the faulty section of the feeder hence giving quality power supply to the healthy portion of the feeder. The official also pointed out that lower maintenance cost and providing quality power supply as the voltage variations due to overhead lines will be reduced.

Under the Optic Fiber Communication (OFC) cable along with underground power distribution line, out of the 3,557 km proposed in length, 2,713.71 km has been completed by December end in four phases with 78.59 per cent coverage.

"The benefits of OFC is that it has easy field connector termination, easy testing with visible light, damage resistant cable, and electrical isolation. Distribution system is much smarter - greater bandwidth and faster speed," added the official.

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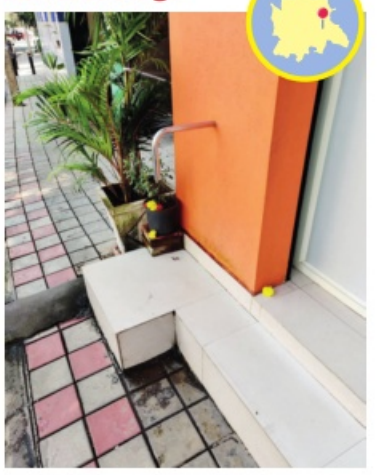
No parking
Kammanahalli

All the main roads of Kammanahalli are clogged on the sides by parked vehicles. There is no space to walk

Water barrier
BSK 2nd Stage



The water outlet in BSK 2nd stage is provided on the footpath, blocking the free movement of pedestrians next to the post office. Repeated complaints to BBMP and minister to shift it to a side have been in vain. Heavy traffic and parking are also posing danger.

Road-diggers
Hennur

It took less than 48 hours for an agency to dig the newly tarred Hennur Road. Is any one answerable? And the tar from the digging, is now left on the edges of manholes.

Active not passive

Doddanekundi RWAs plan to relocate spaces between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles in a bid to encourage use of public transport

This is a prototype of how the pedestrian and cyclist friendly Doddanekundi will look if all plans materialise

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TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

Imagine a Bengaluru with wider footpaths, dedicated infrastructure to enable active mobility and black-spot free areas. This is the dream that Doddanekundi RWAs have for their neighbourhood.

The idea was borne of the 14-km pilot route envisioned to make cycling more accessible for utilitarian commuters. Witnessing the potential for the Doddanekundi village that spans over 12 sq km, the pilot route aimed to create looping connectivity for neighbourhood trips and first and last-mile connectivity. But soon, the imagination expanded to creating an ecosystem out of this neighbourhood that would aid and promote active mobility.

The complete streets project is being implemented by Doddenakundi RWAs, along with Sensing Local and DULT under the Suma grant. 'Complete streets' is a concept that proposes transportation policy and infrastructural design to enable equitable distribution of road space for all users of roads irrespective of ages and choice of mode of transport.

The plan is to relocate spaces between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles in a bid to encourage residents to utilise public transport and adopt sustainable modes of transport. The pilot route will connect Doddenakundi village to ORR to Doddanekundi junction to bus-priority lanes and metro stations. It will further connect these metro stations to the IT tech parks in the vicinity.

A resident of Doddenakundi Nihar Takkar said the areas suffer from the standard problems faced by other parts of the city. "Unlike in CBD areas, where there is ample footpath space for pedestrians, here footpaths are encroached on and are narrow. The junctions are difficult for elderly and physically disabled to navigate," added Takkar. As a cycling enthusiast, he also hopes to see more cycling infrastructure in the area.

As part of the proposal, the team will also be developing supporting infrastructure like designated parking zones and cycle stands. In addition of there will be a focus on redesigning junctions and improvement of existing infrastructure. "To encourage residents to use cyles more often, the maps will denote the distance in time required to cover it. We hope this legibility will bring more people to taking up active mobility transports," said Sobia Rafiq, Cofounder of Sensing Local.

> **We need to assess depending on the neighbourhood, where we can provide dedicated cycle lanes and where to provide shared lanes**
>
> –Sobia Rafiq, Sensing Local

The team is also working with BBMP and NGOs like Ugly Indian to clear garbage spots. The spaces will be turned into aesthetic zones with vibrant wall painting and garbage-free neighbourhoods.

MUP lanes will also be encouraged in areas where spaces are limited. "On a neighbourhood scale, we need to assess where we can provide dedicated cycle lanes and where to provide shared lanes. We are looking at either developing dedicated cycle lanes with bollards or sharing footpaths. In interior roads where the lane has less capacity for traffic, the lane will be designated as shared lane with appropriate signages," added Rafiq.

The proposal also plans to designate parking zones. Sobia notes that in the heart of the city, there are well-designated parking zones however in the outer areas they only have no parking zones. "There are designated no parking zones but no space to park. We intend to create designated parking spaces and turn the rest into no parking zones," added Rafiq. Currently, the team hasn't decided on keeping parking zones paid or unpaid and stated that these decisions will be taken by DULT.

The city has a major problem with street hawkers obstructing the walkers on footpaths and forcing pedestrians to get down onto the road. Addressing the question of relocating them, Sensing Local noted that the solution is not to get rid of them. "We will try to relocate them to spots closed to the local markets and retain their spots in footpaths that are wide enough to not cause path obstruction," added Rafiq.

However, she added that the ownership of the responsibility of relocating the street hawkers is a grey area and requires more assessment.

The team will also work with Tech Parks to encourage an atmosphere of adopting active mobility practices by insisting on proving infrastructure like cycling stands and incentivising employees who cycle to work.

Experts welcomed these plans.

"Based on our first-hand experience and impact assessment of Church Street First testbed, one can say that such initiatives can lead to a lot of positive and sustainable outcomes and they should therefore be scaled up in several other streets/areas also. This new initiative of complete Street can be expected to result in similar positive benefits," said Dr Ashish Verma, Convenor of IISC Sustainable Transportation Lab.

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SPACE ODDITY
How to nurture an inclusive city

BM had reported on Nov 14 about the urban revamp challenge for citizens

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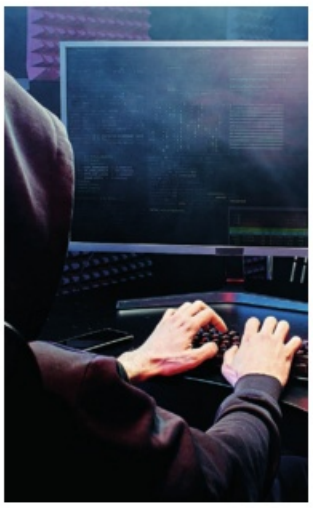
'Cyber crime probe a lengthy process'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

DCP Crime 2, BS Angadi told Bangalore Mirror that cyber crime cases take a longer period to dispose of the case as the police need to gather required evidence and trace the suspect.

"Once the police finish investigation and file a charge-sheet at the court, the case will be considered as disposed of, as the rest will be carried out at the court. Most cyber criminals are from other states which makes it difficult for the police to gather evidence and file the chargesheet," he said.

A senior cyber crime police officer said that it is a lengthy investigation and they need to collect data from different intermediates which takes months to gather. "It is not simple data but complicated which again has to be virtually eliminated and has to be physically examined. We need to trace and reach the suspect and take possession of



mobiles and laptops used for the crime and examine them to establish the link between the suspect and the crime incident. Sometimes, it takes years together to establish the link and dispose of the case," he said.

He added that another issue for the delay of the disposal of cases is human resources: "According to the law, only police inspectors and above ranking officers can investigate cyber crime cases and currently there are eight CEN police inspectors and each of them handles 5,000 to 7,000 cases which is very difficult. Adding a few more inspectors would help in disposing of the cases much quicker."

Commissioner Pant noted that initiating cyber information report (CIR) has been very helpful to bring down the cyber crime in Bengaluru: "Majority of the cyber crime gets diverted to CIR. There would be no need to register an FIR as it works quickly; in case of online thefts, the bank account will be frozen and money would be safely returned to the victim. We have made it easy for people to report cyber crimes through dialing 112 where they can call and register the CIR."

Into the past on a motorcycle

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was to immerse himself in the scenic landscape and visit these historical sites. The Ashokan edicts are located in various parts of the Indian subcontinent with nine found in Karnataka and two in Andhra Pradesh, in southern India.

The edicts, mostly found atop hills, contain Buddhist messages of peace and harmony propagated by the emperor after the Kalinga war.

However, the rationale behind the choice of locations of these edicts often found in nondescript places is still unknown.

As a bike-enthusiast, Balakrishnan often goes on trips. Just a couple of months ago, he went on a road trip to the northeastern states of Assam and Nagaland -- covering Guwahati, Dimapur, Kohima, Imphal, Loktak and Moreh. After several months of planning, he decided to embark on the history-rich Ashokan edicts trip.

"I have been planning to do this trip for some time now. Most of my research was done online. While Wikipedia has a lot of information, the credible information was in the ASI website, Karnataka tourism website, official district websites of Raichur, Gulbarga, Yadgir, Bellary and Koppal, and blogs by other travel enthusiasts.

"Ashoka in Ancient India by Nayanjot Lahiri is a good book for scholarly study on Ashoka's edicts," said Balakrishnan.

According to Balakrishnan, these are perhaps the oldest remnants of Indian history with inscriptions dating back to 2,400 years.

As a child, Balakrishnan was interested in history but eventually veered into engineering. However, he is now making the detour back into his area of interest.

Owing to the pandemic, he had apprehensions about the trip. However, once he embarked on the journey, he observed that due to scanty footfall, there were hardly any crowds.

However, he cautioned riders to be safe and exercise caution. "I prefer to ride under 60-80 km ph and enjoy the ride. There is no reason to hurry as you are here to relax."

He also warned against riding in the night however he was unable to avoid it and rode cautiously. For his bike trips, he prefers to travel in his trusty Avenger.

Commenting that the edicts in Karnataka have been preserved better, however, he noted that adjunct to some of these edicts are active mining areas and the edicts and boulders could also get destroyed in the process.

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personal

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2022, HERE WE ARE

We won't miss the bus

BMTC to be more tech-friendly this year

BMTC is all set to add 40 electric buses and 200 BS-VI diesel buses to its existing fleet

Melvin Mathew
mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) plans on diving into the new year with a better fleet, better technology and increased safety for passengers. The corporation has planned a slew of measures to increase ridership to pre-Covid levels.

From next March, BMTC will offer more digital payment services for their passengers. As of now, the Electronic Ticketing Machines (ETM) are being used only to issue tickets but in the future passengers will be able to pay using UPI, ATM cards, national mobility cards. The tender is expected to be finalised soon.

To tackle the issue of low ridership, BMTC will bring better technology to its bus services. It is set to add 40 e-buses and 200 BS-VI diesel buses to its existing fleet. In total, 600 diesel buses, 90 electric buses and 300 Ashok Leyland electric buses will be added next year. BMTC is also planning on scrapping 600 buses. "We have decided to scrap 600 buses. The engines of these 600 buses are intact but the outer body is completely damaged," said BMTC MD, V Anbu Kumar.

For the past 2.5 years, BMTC had not acquired any new buses and before that, the corporation made some additions to the AC buses. BMTC is planning to bring more non-AC buses to its fleet to improve its service. "The maintenance costs vary from bus to bus but we are not making any profits. We are incurring a loss of Rs 1.5-2 crore daily. Currently, 800 Volvo buses are not plying and we are not able to break even. Due to covid, buses going through ORR, Electronics City, and the airport, have been idle for 20 months now. Schools and colleges used to use more than 400-plus buses," said Kumar.

There has been a decline in the number of students availing of student passes. BMTC noted that students were not getting student passes due to BMTC not fixing last dates for availing passes. Kumar clarified there were also some technical issues with the passes.

"Around 25-30 lakh passengers use BMTC services. Before Covid, we used to get 35 lakh passengers. Three months back, the ridership was as low as 16 lakh and now it has gone up to more than 25 lakh," added Kumar. He added that even if BMTC did not earn revenue, they had to pay their staff and incur other maintenance costs. The idle buses are run for a few kilometres every day to avoid damage.

BMTC also plans on focusing on employee welfare. "We haven't been able to pay retirement and death benefits to our employees due to fund crunch. BMTC has already given compensation to all BMTC staffers' families who succumbed to Covid. All payments will be made in the coming two months."

Kumar noted that BMTC was currently running a record number of non-AC bus schedules, increasing the count from 5,000 to 5,600.

BMTC will also look at some non-traffic revenues as part of its plan. Tenders will be issued for setting up of petrol pumps in the premises and for BESCOM to set up charging points. "However, these are not going to turn into great sources of revenue. We have already spoken to Asian Development Bank to give us a huge loan with low interest. BMTC will utilise this loan towards refurbishing the fleet and taking care of the infrastructure.

In collaboration with the Labour Department, BMTC will also issue passes for garment workers and construction workers to facilitate affordable commuting services for the 2-3 lakh workers in the city. BMTC said that its willing to arrange buses for women workers alone, for companies, as per the requirement.

BMTC buses will also have a new feature to increase the safety of women. At an estimated cost of Rs 26 crore, 5,000 buses running in the city will be equipped with two cameras: one facing towards the driver and one from the driver's side to cover the entire length of the bus.

Initiatives in a nutshell

- BMTC will be procuring 565 BS-VI diesel buses
- Labour Department and BMTC will issue "Vanitha Sangathi" passes to 1 lakh Garment Workers. The cost of these passes will be borne by female garment factory owners (40 per cent), Labour Department, Government of Karnataka (40 per cent) and BMTC (20 per cent).
- BMTC will augment Vajra services in city routes from the present 183 buses to 300 buses
- Installation of vehicle tracking units, CCTV, PIS and panic buttons in 5,000 buses
- Mobile app to provide real-time Passenger Information System (PIS) to commuters
- BMTC will operate 300 electric buses on Gross Cost Contract (GCC) model
- To introduce an advanced ticketing system involving ETMs and UPI/ Wallet/ Credit card/ Debit card payments, 'Automatic Fare Collection System (AFCS)' will be implemented in six months.
- To provide adequate and efficient transport facilities in congested areas with narrow roads and areas surrounding Metro stations, and reduce traffic congestion, BMTC plans to deploy 1,000 mini buses of 20 seating capacity during the next year

KSRTC plans to go electric

Melvin Mathew
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With the state transports running into deeper losses year after year, KSRTC hopes to turn zero negatives by the year 2022.

The corporation has managed to reach 2020 levels but hopes to reach 80 per cent of 2019 ridership numbers by January 2022. Currently, KSRTC is running into an estimated loss of Rs 365 crore per year from operational costs. KSRTC incurs a loss of around Rs 1 crore for each day it operates. The primary reason for the low revenue and ridership is due to the IT sector and other offices still working from home. "The high-end buses are not getting picked up. The inter-state buses going to neighbouring states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil and Kerala remain less than 50 per cent of the 2019 ridership levels due to the IT sector not opening up completely. We should be able to reach 2019 ridership levels by January" said KSRTC MD, Shivayogi C Kalasad.

KSRTC is running into estimated loss of Rs 365 cr a year

"KSRTC will also be increasing the number of routes by honouring the inter-state agreements which were already in place. We have already had talks with Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala and will further discuss new supplementary agreements to get better access to newer destinations in the states by January" added Kalasad.

While the domestic ridership has been stable, KSRTC notes that student ridership is yet to pick up, "With the application process moved online on Seva Sindhu, KSRTC officials are trying to motivate the student to take up passes." Officials are going to colleges and interacting with principals. One nodal officer has been appointed per bus depot and every week officials are interacting with representatives from the colleges to increase the adoption of passes," he added.

KSRTC will also be introducing a digital payment system next year. The trial run has already begun and the first model will be out by the first week of January. "We will start with QR-based ticketing and later move to the smart card system. Considering KSRTC operates in rural areas as well, it will be difficult to implement a 100 per cent digital payment system, however, it will be started on a pilot basis in Kempegowda, Mysore and for airport buses. Based on the success of the project, it will be extended to Tier-II cities" said Kalasad.

Under the FAME 2 scheme, KSRTC has been discussing the inclusion of 50 electric buses for intercity routes. They will also discuss the induction plan for the next year as KSRTC has not added new buses to its fleet for two years now.

KSRTC has no plans to cut down ticket prices though. It has been insisting on fare correction based on increasing diesel prices and other costs for the past year. A one-man committee is preparing an action plan to assess the financial improvements in the sector. The decision regarding increasing fares will be taken as per the suggestion made by the committee. "To become more financially resilient, we are also planning to generate revenue from non-traffic avenues by experting on the commercial lands on a PPP basis. We have started the tendering process for this," he added. With these plans, KSRTC hopes to eliminate losses by 2022 and start making profits by 2023. "Hopefully, the next year will be a year of normalcy for us," Kalsad said.

Nothing off the shelf
Apple's VP of acoustics Gary Geaves said AirPods 3 were entirely built with custom-made components

Study shows that self-driven cars could be designed to be more pedestrian-friendly

GIVE RIGHT OF WAY TO THE PEDESTRIAN

#London [UK]

Automated vehicles could be made more pedestrian-friendly, according to recent research. The research has been published in the 'Computational Brain & Behavior Journal'.

University of Leeds-led scientists investigating how to better understand human behavior in traffic said that neuroscientific theories of how the brain makes decisions can be used in automated vehicle technology to improve safety and make them more human-friendly.

The researchers set out to determine whether a decision-making model called drift-diffusion could predict when pedestrians would cross a road in front of approaching cars and whether it could be used in scenarios where the car gives way to the pedestrian, either with or without explicit signals. This prediction capability will allow the autonomous vehicle to communicate more effectively with pedestrians, in terms of its movements in traffic and any external signals such as flashing lights, to maximise traffic flow and decrease uncertainty.

Drift diffusion models assumed that people reach decisions after the accumulation of sensory evidence up to a threshold at which the decision is made. Professor Gustav Markkula, from the University of Leeds' Institute for Transport Studies and the senior author of the study, said, "When making the decision to cross, pedestrians seem to be adding up lots of different sources of evidence, not only relating to the vehicle's distance and speed but also using communicative cues from the vehicle in terms of deceleration and headlight flashes."

"When a vehicle is giving way, pedestrians will often feel quite uncertain about whether the car is actually yielding, and will often end up waiting until the car has almost come to a full stop before starting to cross. Our model clearly shows this state of uncertainty borne out, meaning it can be used to help design how automated vehicles behave around pedestrians in order to limit uncertainty, which in turn can improve both traffic safety and traffic flow. It is exciting to see that these theories from cognitive neuroscience can be brought into this type of real-world context and find an applied use," he added.

To test their model, the team used virtual reality to place trial participants in different road-crossing scenarios in the University of Leeds' unique HIKER (Highly Immersive Kinematic Experimental Research) pedestrian simulator. Study participants' movements were tracked in high detail while walking freely inside a stereoscopic 3D virtual scene, showing a road with oncoming vehicles. The participant's task was to cross the road as soon as they felt safe to do so.

Different scenarios were tested, with the approaching vehicle either maintaining the same speed or decelerating to let the pedestrian cross, sometimes also flashing the headlights, representing a commonly used signal for yielding intentions in the UK.

As predicted by their model, the researchers found that participants behaved as if they were deciding on when to cross by adding up, over time, the sensory data from vehicle distance, speed, acceleration, as well as communicative cues. This meant that their drift-diffusion model could predict if, and when, pedestrians would be likely to begin crossing the road. Professor Markkula said, "These findings can help provide a better understanding of human behavior in traffic, which is needed both to improve traffic safety and to develop automated vehicles that can coexist with human road users. Safe and human-acceptable interaction with pedestrians is a major challenge for developers of automated vehicles, and a better understanding of how pedestrians behave will be key to enable this." Lead author Dr. Jami Pekkanen, who carried out the research at the University of Leeds, said, "Predicting pedestrian decisions and uncertainty can be used to optimise when, and how, the vehicle should decelerate and signal to communicate that it's safe to cross, saving time and effort for both." **ANI**

BITS & BYTES

BYE BLACKBERRY

BlackBerry has announced that it will discontinue offering significant services for its existing devices in 2022.

As per Mashable, from January 4, the business's smartphones will be without provisioning services. It will be unable to connect to networks, including the mobile phone network, as a result of this. A few years back, BlackBerry's keyboard-centric designs had led to high demand, especially among business workers who relied on BlackBerry services that provide a high degree of confidentiality and anonymity.

BlackBerry may not do much as smartphones continue to change with the introduction of the first touchscreen phone.

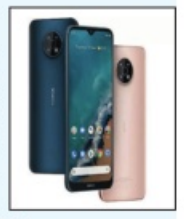
GAMES GOOGLE PLAYS

Google has expanded the library of Stadia games by adding five Stadia Pro games for January 2022.

Darksiders III, The Darkside Detective: A Fumble in the Dark, Bloodstained: Ritual of the Night, Shantae: Risky's Revenge - Director's Cut, and DreamWorks Dragons: Dawn of the New Riders are now available for Stadia Pro subscribers, reports 9To5Google. One can visit the Store on Android, iOS, or web to claim the Stadia Pro January 2022 games. Google has already added 100 games to Stadia during the calendar year 2021, officially meeting its promise of adding at least 100 games to the platform. Google has been gradually adding features to Stadia.

NOKIA G50 UPDATE

Finnish mobile phone manufacturer HMD, the parent company of Nokia, has started rolling out Android 12 update for its latest Nokia G50 smartphones.



The Nokia G50's Android 12 update requires a download of 2.09GB. It has version number V2.160 and comes with the November 2021 Android security patch, reports GSMArena.

Apart from Nokia G50, the Android 12 stable update is also available for Nokia X20 and Nokia X10.

Nokia G50 offers a display of a 6.82-inch HD+ screen of 1640x720p resolution with a waterdrop notch.

How Tesla got Indian-origin engineer to head autopilot team

#San Francisco

Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk took to Twitter to reveal how he chose Ashok Elluswamy from India to work as an autopilot team director at his electric vehicle company. Elluswamy was actually the first employee to be hired for Tesla's Autopilot team, with Musk using Twitter to ask people to apply for the role back in 2015.

"I tweeted that Tesla is about to launch an auto pilot team. Through that tweet, Ashok was the first to be selected in the auto pilot team," Musk said in a tweet. Before joining Tesla, he has worked with WABCO Vehicle Control System and has interned with Volkswagon Electronic Research Lab.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from the College of Engineering Guindy, Chennai and a

Master's degree in Robotics System Development from Carnegie Mellon University. As per a LinkedIn endorsement from Elluswamy's professor at CMU, John Dalon, he was one of the top students and showed initiative in learning a wide variety of topics. Recently, Musk tweeted that he is hiring Artificial Intelligence (AI) engineers who are passionate about solving day-to-day problems through AI.

"As always, Tesla is looking for hardcore AI engineers who care about solving problems that directly affect people's lives in a major way," Musk tweeted along with a link to apply for the job.

Interested candidates can apply by filling in fields like name, email, exceptional work done in software, hardware or AI, dropping their resume in the PDF format and hitting the Apply option. **IANS**

HEALTH TIP: The blue light from electronic devices messes with your circadian rhythm, or sleep cycle.

One hard-boiled egg has about 0.6 micrograms of B12. Most of the B12 comes from the yolk.

BangaloreMirror | 9
Monday, January 3, 2022
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BEST OF
DR MAHINDER WATSA

The finest responses of Dr Watsa are being republished in this column as a tribute to him.

1 How do actors in adult movies have so much stamina? How do they take so long to ejaculate? Do they ejaculate first and then shoot the scene? How are their penises so long and thick? Do they undergo some kind of medical treatment or take medicines? Are the effects short term or do they last long?

The reason they get the job is because of what they have, and what you and I don't. Besides their natural gift, all the tricks of the trade are used to titillate the viewer, including filming with breaks and clever editing. Usually, no medication is used. It's a hard way to make a living.

2 I am single and 28 years old. I have observed that after I masturbate, I experience severe pain in my left testicle. It persists for a couple of days. What could cause this? Do you think I need to consult a doctor?

Only an urologist or andrologist can diagnose what's wrong and suggest a treatment. Why have you waited all these years?

3 I am 24 years old. I got married in May. Initially, while making love, we used to rub each other's genitals with our underwear on, and I was able to reach an orgasm after rubbing long enough. Gradually, we started having intercourse, but I have been unable to reach orgasm. What should I do?

Your husband can give you an orgasm through foreplay and then start intercourse 10 minutes later. Should he finish before you have reached your second orgasm, you can stroke yourself over his thigh or use his or your fingers to reach the second orgasm.

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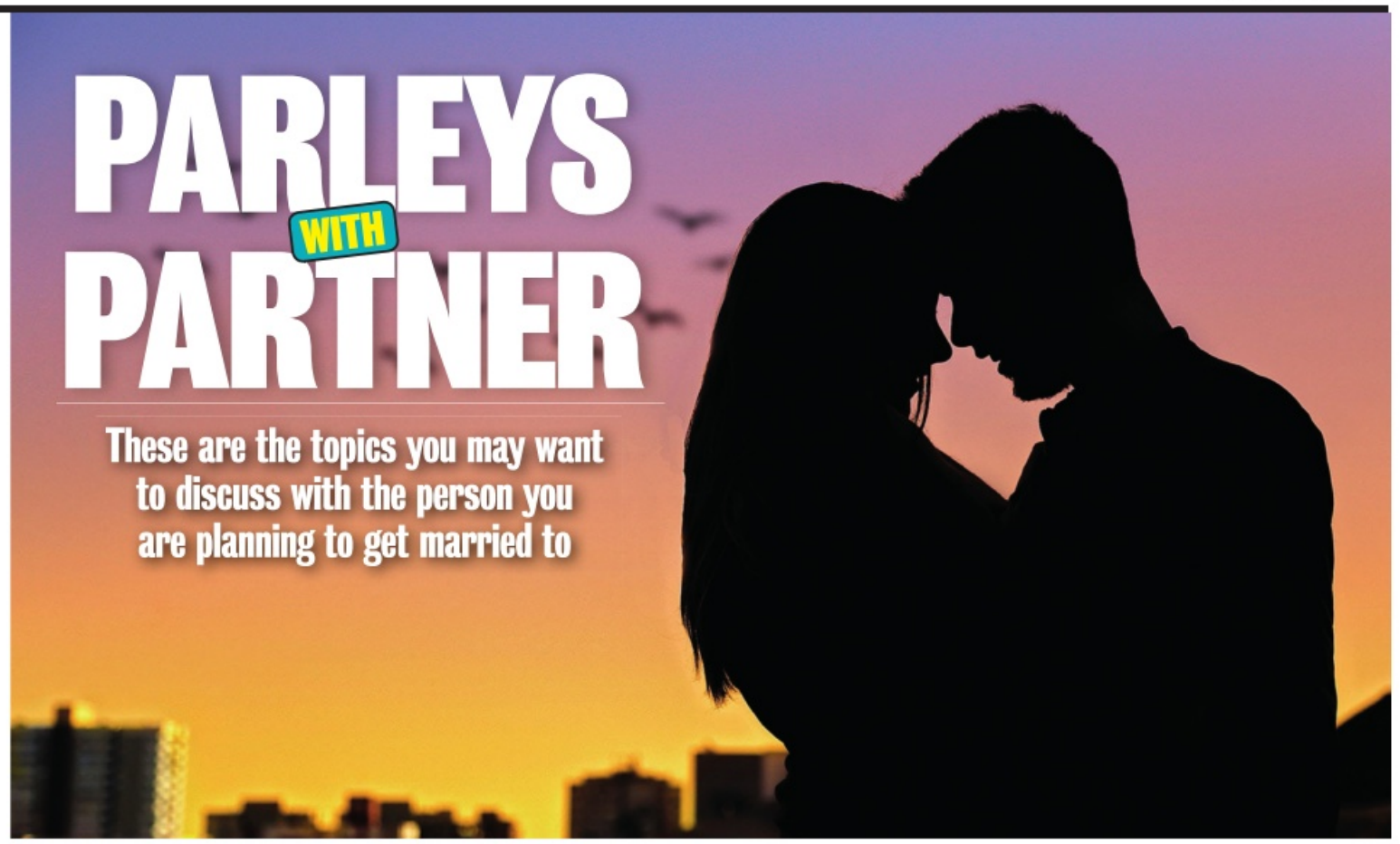

These are the topics you may want to discuss with the person you are planning to get married to

Ravina M Sachdev
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There are plenty of things to be spontaneous about in life, but marriage isn't one of them! Getting hitched is a life-altering decision, and it's one you'll have to live with for the rest of your life. You may be madly in love with your partner but planning your wedding without discussing important details about your lives is going to cost you later. So, if you're thinking of settling down with your other half, you might want to ask them these questions before to avoid getting disappointed later on.

Money Matters

Trust us when we say that talking about finances does not make you sound like a gold digger! On the contrary, it's important to be clear about how much money is coming in, so that you can plan your future accordingly. It'll also help if the two of you are aware of each other's spending habits. If you fall in the category of people who save their salaries till they retire, and your partner believes in spending his entire paycheck on the first of every month, there are going to be major issues down the road.

Kids Or No Kids?

Remember when Sutton and Richard from The Bold Type got married only to discover that one of them was desperate to have kids, while the other couldn't stand the idea of having children? Yeah well, it almost broke them up. To avoid being in the same situation, it would be wise to discuss kids well before you say yes to spending your lives together.

Bedroom Talk

What's the point of thinking about getting hitched to your partner if you guys cannot talk about sex openly? We hate to break it to you, but there's no sense in being together if the two of you aren't compatible sexually. If one of you needs to get intimate every day, and the other is fine with having sex thrice a month then it's going to be a rough journey ahead.

Living With Parents Or Moving Out?

If your guy is living with his parents, and you want to live separately after your wedding, ensure that you are clear about it well in advance. Do not expect your partner to read your mind. And while you're discussing that, it'll also be a wise talk about who would be taking care of the parents at a later stage in life.

What About Long-Term Goals?

We get that you're in love with your partner today, but what about tomorrow? What happens if you want to move to a European country and your partner does want to leave his family behind? This is exactly why you need to be on the same page about long-term goals before tying the knot. Talk about how the two of you envision your future, who is willing to make compromises, and then move forward with a clear head.

All this being said, do not expect your partner to compromise on every aspect if you aren't willing to make any changes to your life. It would be best to remember that marriage is a two-way street! **–FEMINA**

MIRRORLIGHTS

Estrogen may shield off Alzheimer's

A new study has found that greater cumulative exposure to estrogen in life can protect women from Alzheimer's disease.

The research has been published in the 'Neurology Journal'.

The findings come from an analysis of personal histories, MRI scans and cognitive tests on 99 women in their late 40s to late 50s. The researchers confirmed an earlier finding linking menopause to lower gray matter volume (GMV) in brain areas that are also vulnerable to Alzheimer's. But they also linked indicators of higher overall estrogen exposure, such as a longer span of reproductive years (menarche to menopause), more children and the use of menopause hormone therapy and hormonal contraceptives, to higher GMV in some of these brain areas. The study was an observational study, but it added to the evidence that estrogen may have a protective effect on the female brain, limiting the loss of gray matter that normally comes with menopause, and thereby potentially reducing Alzheimer's risk.

"Our findings suggest while the menopause transition may bring vulnerability for the brain, other reproductive history events indicating greater estrogen exposure bring resilience," said study senior author Dr. Lisa Mosconi.

Ageing stiffens blood vessels in women

According to a new study conducted at the University of Jyvaskyla in Finland, age is a strong determinant of arterial stiffness.

Hormones, menstrual cycle phase, contraceptive pill phase and menopausal states are also associated with arterial stiffness.

The human vasculature consists of arteries, veins, and capillaries where blood circulates. As the heart pumps blood, the arteries that carry blood throughout the body. The arteries dilate and contract, allowing blood to progress. This propagation is known as a pulse wave. The walls of the arteries should be elastic enough, though not too much so, to allow the pulse wave to proceed without the walls of the arteries rupturing. As the blood vessels age, the arterial wall stiffens. Stiffening increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and the risk of cardiac mortality. Female sex hormones have been shown to affect factors that regulate vascular wall elasticity, so high estrogen levels are thought to be one of the mechanisms by which young women acquire a lower risk of cardiovascular disease than male peers. "Our study allowed for a comprehensive examination of the different hormonal statuses in women's lives," said Associate Professor Eija Laakkonen.

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SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

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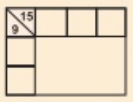
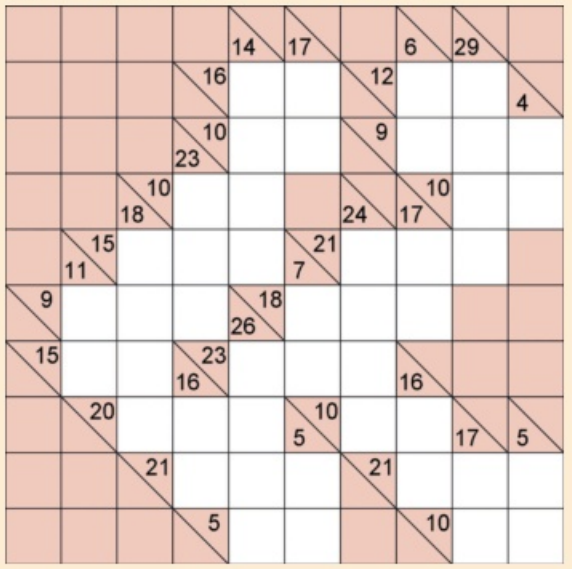
Kakuro

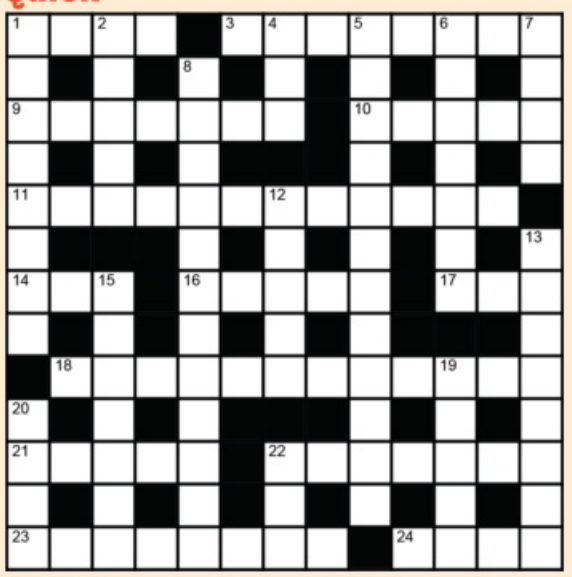
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Coal scuttles (4)
3 Snowstorm (8)
9 In name only (7)
10 North Indian joint in Basaveshwara Nagar (5)
11 Encircle (12)
14 Mist or smog (3)
16 Second largest of Greek Ionian islands (5)
17 Outer as a prefix ? (3)
18 A utensil used in dining or for measuring (12)
21 Civilian dress (5)
22 Monster (7)
23 Softened or yielded (8)
24 Notice (4)

DOWN

1 Manacle (8)
2 Hesitate to agree (5)
4 Online laugh (3)
5 Dr. __ ___ : third President of India? (5,7)
6 Can be heard? (7)
7 Fall in drops (4)
8 One after another (2,10)
12 More certain (5)
13 Perimeter (8)
15 Full of joy and happiness (7)
19 Bakery fixtures (5)
20 Bollywood's ___ Akbar Anthony (4)
22 Billiards stick (3)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: X EQUALS H
JVK TXMV XM UO GYQ GN OUBXQ, CYUDRAL JAOG UO XM GYQ GN SUVK.

Linemaro

Sorry, but you owe me a drink. I looked at you and dropped mine

Mindchow

The easiest way to save face is to keep the lower half shut

Joke of the day

Money doubling and pyramid schemes: A tax on people who are bad at math

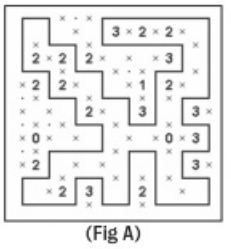
Loop

Rules

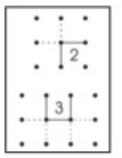
» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)

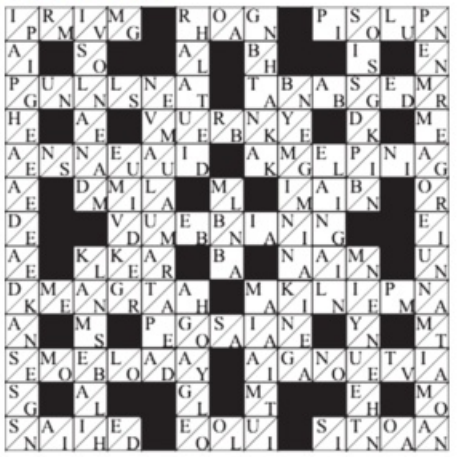


(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed

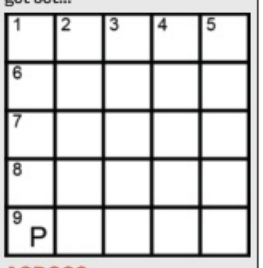
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 Shema; 6 Iliac;
7 Tra-la; 8 A home;
9 Up Rod

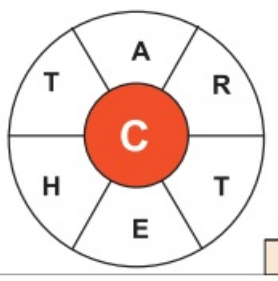
DOWN

1 Camps; 2 R Hail;
3 Loath; 4 Ma IOU;
5 A deer

Mensapuzzle

Which number replaces the question mark and completes the puzzle?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

19 Average; 21 Good; 23 Outstanding

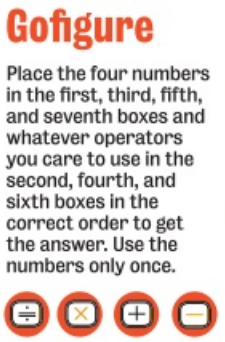
SudokuChallenge

8	6		2			7	1	
				7		8		
9					8	5	6	
4					2		5	
		2				9		
	1		9					8
	2	9	8					1
		3		2				
	8	4			1		9	3

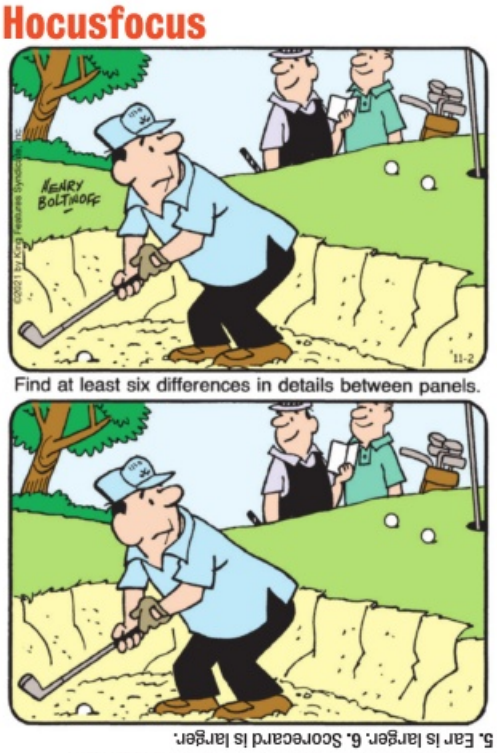
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

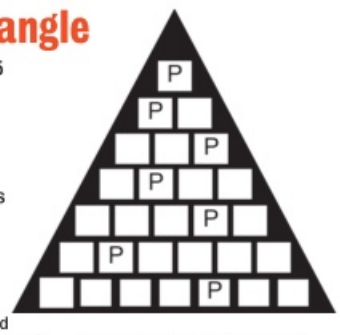
Differences: 1. Leg is moved. 2. Tree limb is longer. 3. Sleeve is shorter. 4. Golf club handle is shorter. 5. Ear is larger. 6. Scorecard is larger.

Riddler

What is represented here? Spring–Hola Summer–Bonjour Fall–Hello Winter–Aloha

Alpha triangle

1 Atomic number 15
2 European river
3 Summit
4 Tight ___, predicament
5 Brings to a halt
6 Streams or pours
7 Stickler

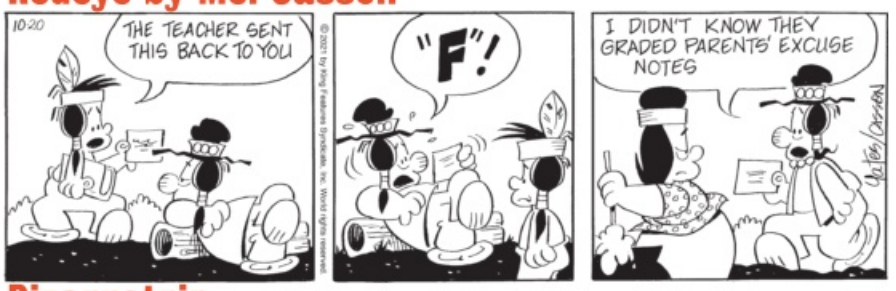


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

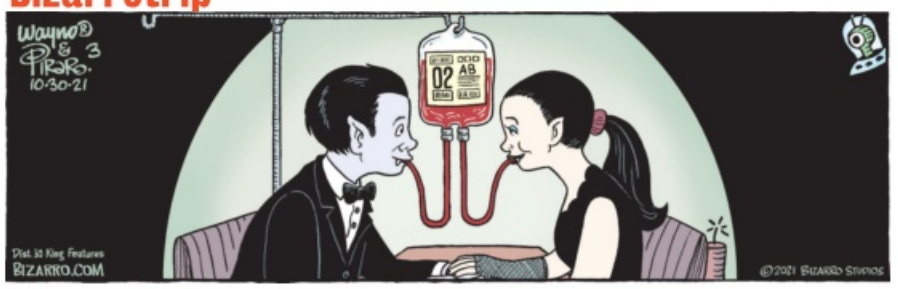
DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Redeye by Mel Casson



Bizarrotrip



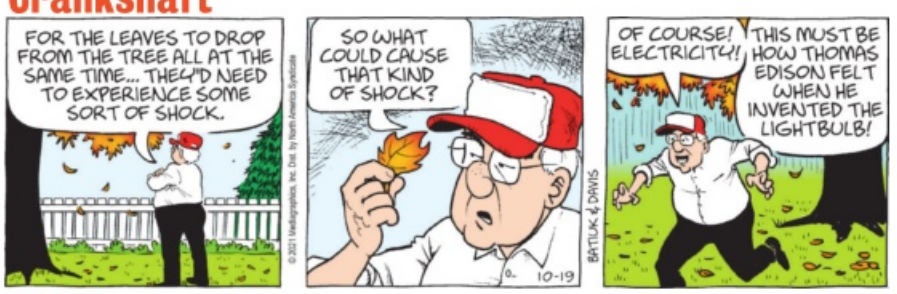
Diamond Lil

EXCUSE ME, BUT WHY ARE YOU SITTING ON HERMAN?
YOU'VE HEARD OF ELF ON A SHELF?
YES
WELL, I'M MUMMY ON A DUMMY
THIS REALLY HURTS!
www.creators.com

Hart of the city

HEART, WE HAD SUCH A GOOD TIME TONIGHT! WE WONDERED IF YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN PLAYING WITH US EVEN AFTER CHRIS COMES BACK?
THAT'S SO NICE OF YOU GUYS! BUT I THINK I'LL PASS. THIS WAS FUN FOR A NIGHT BUT KIND OF A TIME SINK.
I MISSED BOTH PARTS OF THE "FAKE HOUSEWIVES" REUNION! BUT MAYBE I CAN COME BACK FOR GUEST APPEARANCES?
ANYTIME!!

Crankshaft


FOR THE LEAVES TO DROP FROM THE TREE ALL AT THE SAME TIME... THEY'D NEED TO EXPERIENCE SOME SORT OF SHOCK.
SO WHAT COULD CAUSE THAT KIND OF SHOCK?
OF COURSE! ELECTRICITY!
THIS MUST BE HOW THOMAS EDISON FELT WHEN HE INVENTED THE LIGHTBULB!
BATLIK & DAVIS

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today you are blessed by elders. Last few days' issues may be resolved now and destiny is on your side. Your stalled projects are likely to start now. Some money that was stuck is likely to be recovered. You may also plan for a religious trip with family members, which may raise your spirits. You may get a chance to travel overseas or go on a long-distance trip

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today you may be busy with children's education. You are likely to travel for this purpose too. You may also plan for a change in your current job. You may also plan for higher education to enhance your career. You may also hear some good news in terms of a competitive examination. Love birds may enjoy happy moments.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today you may be blessed by the moon. After a sound sleep, you may feel healthy, you may enjoy every moment. The moon will make you confident, which may reflect into your way of working. Old health issues may be resolved now. You are likely to help some needy person, which may increase respect for you.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today you may be affected by negative forces of the moon, which may make you upset and arrogant. You should be ready for sudden and unexpected changes in your day-to-day routine. Your profits may be converted into losses, so it is advised that you postpone making investments for some days. You may be in a self-exploration phase, which may lead you towards the truths of life.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today you are likely to have a change in your place or position. You are advised to read any document carefully before signing on it. You are advised to be careful in terms of parents' health. Investments in risky assets may lead to losses, so it is suggested to postpone making such an investment for some days.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today you may feel unhappiness, be dull and feel unhealthy which may affect your way of working. There may be some delay in your current projects completion, which may lead to arrogance in your behaviour. It is advised that you avoid adventure tours or rash driving. Love birds may experience some disharmony.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today you are blessed by the moon. Money which was stuck may be recovered now, which may increase liquidity in your business. You may be in a leading position in your office in terms of a project. You are likely to get incentives in terms of promotions. Bonding with the spouse is likely to improve, which may create domestic harmony.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today you are blessed by the moon so you may feel energetic and make fast decisions in terms of your business. Your subordinates may help you complete your project before time, which may increase trust in your work. Disputes with siblings may be resolved now. Those in jobs may get some incentives in terms of promotions.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today you are likely to get a big order, which may increase your business. With the help of some influential person, you are likely to get benefits at work. You may also expect promotions. Job seekers may get a suitable job. You are likely to plan to renovate your house or office, which will enhance your status. You may enjoy romantic moments with your loved one.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today you may resolve many problems with the help of your communication skills. You may also plan for some advanced course to enhance your skills, which may be beneficial for your career in the near future. Love birds may enjoy romantic moments. You may be able to gain control over your opponents and rivals. You may also plan to get a house or vehicle loan.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today you should control your straightforwardness as it may affect your relationships. You may plan to renovate your house and may also spend on buying some artifacts for the home. You are likely to enjoy some social event, which may increase your network. You may also invest some capital in your family business.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today you may be busy at work. Too much work pressure may make you tired mentally and you may not be able to enjoy some family events or you may arrive very late, which can affect your domestic harmony. Your efficiency may be praised by your seniors, which may lead to a promotion in the current job.

KIDZONE

Ananya L Bhargav, 6 Years, Bright Kid Academy Of Excellence

Aditya R Anepla, 7 Years, Venus International School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No.4, KSCCF Compound, Pampa Maha Kavi Road, Chamrajpet, Bengaluru 560 018; Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
Y+2=3=27+2/3(6)
Y÷2•3=27•2/3(6)
Y÷2•3=54/3(6)
Y÷2•3=18(6)
Y÷2•3=108
Y÷2=3=108o3
Y÷2=108o3
Y=36•2
Y=72

RIDDLER
Season's Greetings.

QUOTE UNCODE
And when he is out of sight, quickly also is he out of mind.

FAST FIVE

S	H	A	M	E
M	A	H	O	E
A	L	T	A	R
C	I	L	I	A
P	R	O	U	D

STRIKE OUT

S	A	I	D		E	L	I		S	T	A	N		
S		L		L		M		E		O				
E	M	B	O	D	Y		A	G	O	U	T	I		
N		M		E	O	S	I	N		N		T		
D	E	A	R	T	H		M	I	N	I	M	A		
E		K	E	A		A		N	A	M		N		
A		D	I	L		M		I	A	N		R		
E	N	N	E	A	D		A	G	E	I	N	G		
H		A		V	E	R	N	E		K		E		
G	U	L	L	E	T		A	B	A	S	E	R		
I		S		A		H		I		I		E		
P	R	I	M		H	O	G		I	S	U	P		

QUICK

R	E	L	E	N	T	E	D		E	S	P	Y		
A		U		O		U		N		N		R		
M	U	F	F	I		C	H	I	M	E	R	A		
A		E		S			A		V			D		
D	E	S	S	E	R	T	S	P	O	O	N			
U				E		S								
F		L		E			S							
F	O	G		C	O	R	F	U		E	X	O		
U		C		U		H		L		B				
C	I	R	C	U	M	S	C	R	I	B	E			
P		I		S			I			P				
N	O	M	I	N	A	L		K	A	D	A	I		
A		E		I		O		A		U		R		
H	O	D	S		B	L	I	Z	Z	A	R	D		

BULL'S EYE
ache, acre, arch, care, cart, cater, char, chart, chat, CHATTER, cheat, crate, each, etch, race, ratchet, reach, react, retch, tact, teach, trace, tract

MENSA PUZZLE
51. Moving to the right, double each number and subtract 3 to give the next number along.

SUDOKU

6	8	4	7	5	1	2	9	3
5	2	9	3	4	6	8	7	1
1	7	3	6	2	9	4	8	5
7	1	6	9	4	5	3	2	8
3	5	2	1	8	7	9	4	6
4	9	8	3	6	2	1	5	7
9	3	7	4	1	5	7	6	2
2	4	1	5	7	6	8	3	9
8	6	5	2	9	3	7	1	4

ALPHA TRIANGLE
P, Po, Top, Spot, Stops, Spouts, Fusspot.

GO FIGURE
Easy
2 x 4 + 9 − 6 = 11
Medium
7 x 4 − 6 − 1 = 21
Hard
8 + 2 x 7 − 4 = 66

LOOP

KAKURO

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 # Rahman's daughter engaged
Music maestro AR Rahman's eldest daughter and musician Khatija Rahman on Sunday announced her engagement with Riyasdeen Shaik Mohamed

Sunny recalls interview that left her hurt

Sunny Leone still remembers her controversial interview from 2016 when she had to face a barrage of uncomfortable questions that wanted to play with her emotions. While speaking to an entertainment portal recently Sunny opened up about the infamous interview.

She said what hurt her most is that nobody present in the room had the guts to get up and try to stop it when the interviewer launched a sort of personal attack with questions related to Sunny's past as an adult performer. She felt so uncomfortable during the interview that she wanted to walk out of it.

Sunny also revealed that the controversial interview took a toll on her and it took some time to leave behind the bitter experience. She said it was like multi-levels of feeling hurt because there were rows and rows of chairs with people sitting in that room.

The actress recalls she even turned back and asked those people in the room whether she hurt anyone in any way or why they didn't think that these questions should be stopped. Despite the uncomfortable questions Sunny didn't leave the interview and kept her cool.

The actress who will soon make her Kollywood debut in 'Shero' further revealed that she has faced these kinds of questions before, but that 2016 interview hurt the most because the way those questions were asked didn't feel okay.

After that controversial interview, Sunny had received quite a lot of support from Bollywood celebrities and fans and was even praised for staying mentally strong while facing the interviewer.

Apart from her film commitment, Sunny Leone will soon start shooting for the new season of the reality show she's part of.

Meanwhile, she has also been dragged into a fresh controversy for her latest video song 'Madhuban'.

– ETimes

Leading lady

Actor Lara Dutta says she is on lookout to play great characters, not prime roles

Actor Lara Dutta says she is at a stage in her career where she is in search of characters that promise to leave a lasting impression rather than chase prime roles.

Dutta has been working in the industry since her big-screen debut in 2003 with "Andaaz" and has featured in several successful films in the last two decades.

In an interview with PTI, the actor said what gets her to board a project today is the script, the people involved in mounting it and the scope it has for her to try something new. That is why, she said, even a film like "BellBottom" which was headlined by Akshay Kumar, got her excited as she got to play the role of former Prime Minister Indir

"It is the content that is being made, what the character is doing is what excites me. I have gone long past the phase where I want to play the lead or the prime character, because at the end of the day, I genuinely feel you will be limiting yourself greatly if you are going to come with that mindset.

"There are some incredible characters that leave an indelible mark on your mind, long after a show or a film is over. Playing Mrs Gandhi in 'BellBottom' is a fine example, where the film was led by a top hero. But I knew if I had the opportunity to play her, I would do it in a way she would never be forgotten on screen," Dutta said. The 43-year-old actor said she isn't just keen to experiment with her characters but also switch genres in the digital space, since her OTT debut in 2020.

While her debut series "Hundred" featured her as a cop, her 2021 follow-up with "Hiccups and Hookups" saw in the role of a single mother navigating the world of dating.

"I have gone long past the phase where I want to play the lead, because, I feel you will be limiting yourself greatly if you are going to come with that mindset
–Lara Dutta

She is now gearing up for the release of her third OTT outing, "Kaun Banegi Shikharwati", which stars Naseeruddin Shah as an eccentric king in search for his heir apparent - one among his four daughters, played by Dutta, Soha Ali Khan, Kritika Kamra and Anya Singh.

Directed by Gauravv Chawla of "Baazaar" fame and Ananya Banerjee, the series follows the daughters, as they compete in a series of royal games, the winner of which will be chosen as 'king'. Dutta, who plays the eldest daughter Devyani in the ZEE5 series, said since her character already considers herself as the heir apparent, she finds fighting for the throne "completely bizarre". "So their coming together to play these games with each other, leads to a lot of comedy, fun and quirkiness. I loved the opportunity to step into a world like that. Have this crazy family led by an eccentric king," she added.

For the former Miss Universe, who was born in Uttar Pradesh and later lived in Bengaluru and Mumbai, understanding the world of royalty was not a task. She said she has seen that life through her friends, who are members of royal families. "They live in fancy areas of Mumbai and Delhi, lead a cosmopolitan life but the moment they go back to their kingdom and principalities, they have to wear these saris with ghunghats (veils). They live in a different world for that amount of time that they spend there," she added.

But the series, backed by Applause Entertainment in association with Emmay Entertainment, follows the lives of a fictional royal family through humour, she said. "The show sounded quirky, fun, and different from anything that was on the OTT space already. We have seen a lot of dysfunctional families on screen before but this is set in a dystopian setting... Almost in a Wes Anderson type of a world."

The series also gave the actor an opportunity to star alongside acting greats like Shah and Raghubir Yadav, Dutta said. The idea to share screen space with the veterans was initially "scary as hell", she added.

–PTI

Ajay Devgn has a packed 2022

Actor-filmmaker Ajay Devgn has revealed that he has a busy year ahead courtesy his projects lined up and that he will be going to work every day. Talking about what 2022 looks like for him, the actor said: "I've got a directorial - 'Runway 34' scheduled in April; I got an OTT release, 'Rudra: The Edge of Darkness' sometime in February-end or March. I'm starting two to three new films." The actor shared what he wishes for. "I like to just think I'm going to work every day. That's all I ever want and wish for."

His 2022 also includes appearances in 'RRR' and 'Gangubai Kathiawadi'. Ajay will also be seen in 'Maidaan' and Indra Kumar's 'Thank God'. He will begin the shoot for the Hindi remake of 'Kaithi' and Rohit Shetty's 'Singham 3'.

Just a couple on a jungle safari

Rumoured couple Ananya Panday and Ishaan Khatter are believed to be secretly holidaying together at Ranthambore National Park. They have been dropping similar pictures on Instagram, and as they rang in the New Year, they have both shared pictures of the tiger on the gram. Sharing a set of pictures of the tiger and a deer, Ananya wrote, "Entering 2022 with a grateful, happy heart stay safe, be kind & make every moment count #YearOfTheTiger"

Ishaan posted another set of the same tiger and wrote, "Eye of the & with that, we begin the year of the tiger!!!"

Fans immediately flooded their posts with comments. A user commented on Ishaan's post and wrote, "You and Ananya are together." Another user wrote, "Acha aaplog sath me photo kyu nhi daalte hmhe to sbkuch pta hai." Fans also started requesting for a picture of them together. "Bhai aap ananya or kiara saath me toh ek hi photo ko tag krdo alag alag kyu post ker rahe ho," commented another fan.

Earlier, Ananya and Ishaan reportedly arrived for a special screening of 'Jersey' at Shahid Kapoor's residence.